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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ZKGM](#) [EU](#) [GM](#)

SUBJECT: ENGAGING WITH THE GERMANS ON THEIR EU CENTRAL ASIA STRATEGY

Classified By: DCM John Koenig for reasons 1.5(b),(d).

11. (C) (Summary) Germany has made engagement with Central Asia a top priority for its upcoming EU presidency. The Germans hope to strengthen regional cooperation in Central Asia, expand the region's economic options, increase cooperation on energy, promote the rule of law, and expand contacts between Central Asia and the West in such fields as education. Above all, the Germans hope to create a sustainable basis for deeper relations between the EU and Central Asia that will long outlive the German presidency. Germany does not aim to bring significant new EU resources to bear in Central Asia, but plans to make EU programs more coherent and more focused on regional coordination.

12. (C) We see significant opportunities for fruitful U.S.-German cooperation during the presidency to advance our priorities in Central Asia. Germany, although a leader in the EU in terms of contacts with Central Asia, needs encouragement to think ambitiously and strategically. Our contacts have stressed their desire to consult closely with us as their Central Asia strategy emerges. This openness to cooperation is partly motivated by the realization that the EU simply does not carry the same weight in the region as other major powers do. Given the Germans' keen interest and relative regional strength compared to other EU member states (Germany is the only member state with embassies in all five capitals) Germany is likely to remain an EU leader on Central Asia for the foreseeable future. For that reason, developing a close working relationship with Germany on Central Asia

during their presidency should help ensure sustained U.S. influence on EU policy toward the region well into the future. Among the kinds of cooperation with the EU we should consider launching during the German presidency are:

- joint initiatives on regional anti-terrorism and anti-narcotics programs in Central Asia
- joint initiatives linking Central Asian countries with Afghanistan through investment, combined police training, and involvement in civilian reconstruction
- support for construction of additional energy pipelines
- cooperation with donors like Japan and international financial institutions to promote regional Central Asian transportation infrastructure
- joint initiatives promoting rule of law
- joint initiatives on exchange programs in such areas as education. End Summary.

Cooperation on Programs

13. (C) The October visit of DAS Feigenbaum and Assistance Coordinator Klepp created a foundation for closer coordination on assistance programs. Regular contact between American assistance coordinators and counterparts from Germany and the Commission, both in capitals and in the various Central Asian countries, should help us to shape the overall EU assistance package and to build close coordination with the U.S. into the EU's approach to the region. We should encourage other EU countries to commit to expanding their diplomatic presence in the region during the German presidency to build a foundation for closer coordination with them.

Regional Cooperation

14. (C) While the Germans have promoted their Central Asia strategy as a major initiative, they stress that its funding is limited. The 2007-2013 EU budget allots about one billion euros for Central Asia, and the Germans do not foresee any substantial additional EU or German funding during this timeframe. The main thrust of the German plan will be to recast the EU's aid program by creating a regional strategy with greater focus than the current country specific action plans. We should, of course, encourage greater EU financial commitment to the region, but also support the German interest in focusing much of the available resources on regional cooperation. Some areas where Germany hopes to increase cooperation include security (terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and border security), natural resource management (water and energy), and economic development. All of these are areas where we should seek opportunities to find synergies in our Central Asian assistance programs.

15. (C) The Germans plan to encourage Central Asian countries to strengthen ties with surrounding countries--e.g. to deepen relations with countries like Afghanistan. German contacts said that officials from isolated countries like Turkmenistan told Foreign Minister Steinmeier during his recent trip to Central Asia that they are interested in the Trans-Afghan pipeline. They also note that Tajikistan already cooperates with Afghanistan, on some security issues. We should urge the Germans to give special emphasis to encouraging Central Asian cooperation with Afghanistan. Joint U.S.-EU initiatives to encourage investment and trade by wealthy Central Asian countries like Kazakhstan in Afghanistan are one possibility. Another would be to encourage EU police training programs that increase cooperation between Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries on counternarcotics issues. Another, more ambitious, possibility would be to try to draw Central Asian expertise into the civilian reconstruction effort in Afghanistan.

Energy Cooperation

16. (C) Energy will loom large during the German EU presidency with a "Strategic Energy Review" expected in January and the adoption of an energy action plan in March. In Central Asia, the Germans would like to foster the

development of a regional energy market by rehabilitating the north-south energy grid and providing technical expertise to modernize the Central Asian energy infrastructure. While MFA contacts state that the EU has neither the means nor ability to finance the construction of pipelines, our contacts frequently note the importance of increasing energy options both for Europe and for Central Asia. We should seek to ensure that discussion of alternative energy pipelines and sources from Central Asia remains a key part of the EU energy discussion.

Economic Integration

¶17. (C) As noted above, the Germans expect the EU to stick to its traditional role of providing technical assistance and training as opposed to becoming involved in expensive infrastructure projects. However, the Germans can be encouraged to work more closely with other large donors such as the Japanese, who are involved in larger projects. The EU could provide technical assistance to support those projects.

In addition, they could use their influence with international financial institutions to draw more infrastructure investment into the region. The Germans concede the importance of regional integration and opening up Central Asia to broader economic options. We should encourage them to use their influence to ensure that the practical basis for integration such as highways and other transport links receive due weight in their strategy.

Rule of Law

¶18. (C) While German officials share our concerns about human rights and democracy in the region, they argue that we must have realistic expectations about progress in these areas. Some officials, such as Political Director Michael Schaefer, argue that it will take a generation before significant progress can be achieved. The Germans and the EU have some programs, such as judicial training programs, to promote the rule of law. Regarding human rights, they generally argue the best way forward is to keep the regional leaders engaged in a dialogue. For example they hailed the recent agreement by Uzbekistan to participate in regular dialogue with the EU on human rights in general and the Andijon incident in particular.

¶19. (C) We should note that we also have realistic expectations for the region. We should not let semantic distinctions between democracy promotion and promoting rule of law obscure the fact that most of our work in these areas aims at the same goal. We should encourage Germany and the EU to develop a more coherent strategy for improving the rule of law in Central Asia and then coordinate our programs with theirs. At the same time, we should stress the importance of maintaining human rights standards. We should, for example, support EU efforts to draw Uzbekistan out of its shell through dialogue, but when the question of EU sanctions on Uzbekistan comes up for review during the German presidency, we should remind the Germans that dialogue cannot be a substitute for progress on the ground in human rights practices.

Exchanges

¶10. (C) Since the Germans expect progress on human rights and rule of law to be slow, they are looking for programs that gradually open up the Central Asian societies to new influences over the long term. During Foreign Minister Steinmeier's recent trip to the region all five Central Asian countries indicated an interest in more assistance in education, and the Germans plan to make this an important focus of EU work. This would mainly take the form of technical assistance to improve teacher training and the administration of national education systems. MFA contacts have also suggested expanding the German-Kazakh University, created in 1999 and located in Almaty, into a regional center.

¶11. (C) Germany hopes the interaction with EU officials and

increased familiarization with EU standards will allow these programs to become models of good governance and provide models of best practices. Exchange programs that enabled educators from Central Asia to visit and work in Europe would be another element of this strategy. We should stress that we, too, see the importance of exchange as a way of opening up the region to new influences, and consider what kind of parallel programs we can develop with the EU.

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